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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; April 17, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo
Prosecution Seeks Summons
against Former President Roh Next Week

JoongAng Ilbo
Blue House Keeps Eye on 46 High-ranking Officials 24/7
for Possible Corruption

Dong-a Ilbo, Segye Ilbo, All TVs
Supreme Court: "Web Portals Responsible for Libel"

Hankook Ilbo
National Assembly to Publicly Debate
Constitutional Amendment in July

Hankyoreh Shinmun
Some of the \$5 Million, Which Taekwang Industrial Chairman Park
Handed to Former President Roh's Nephew-in-law, Found to Have Flown
into Company of Roh's Brother-in-law

Seoul Shinmun
ROKG Sets Goal of Joining World's Top Ten Exporters
This Year

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

According to a survey by the National Veterinary Research and
Quarantine Service, U.S. beef imports this year were two-thirds of
Australian beef imports, with 33 percent market share in the ROK as
of April 10. (JoongAng) One year after the ROK and the U.S. reached
the beef deal, U.S. beef has successfully reentered the ROK market.
(Chosun)

President Lee Myung-bak, in an April 16 meeting with U.S. Special
Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Holbrooke, said that the
ROKG will look for ways to extend practical assistance to
Afghanistan. (Dong-a, Seoul) An ROK diplomatic source said, "At a
time when the ROK desperately needs cooperation from the U.S. to

deal with North Korea's threats, it is very meaningful that Ambassador Holbrooke, not U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy Bosworth, visited Seoul. The ROKG first needs to show its good faith on the Afghanistan issue before asking for strong cooperation from the U.S. on the North Korean issue." (Chosun) Blue House and foreign ministry officials said there was no request for troop deployment to Afghanistan. A foreign ministry official, who attended Ambassador Holbrooke's meeting with Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan, said, however, that there was a request for police trainers. (Hankyoreh)

The ROK and the U.S. will hold their first high-level talks on April 23 to reach a final agreement on the relocation of USFK bases. (Dong-a)

Minister for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Chang Tae-pyong said in an interview with Dong-a Ilbo that this is the right time to open the ROK rice market; amid high international rice prices, if we now impose tariffs on imports of rice, rice imports will lose their competitiveness, thereby working in favor of ROK farmers. (Dong-a)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The U.S. and Japan yesterday submitted lists of North Korean entities targeted for sanctions to a UN panel in response to Pyongyang's recent rocket launch. (JoongAng, Seoul, Segye)

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In a rare move, North Korea's Rodong Shinmun released the photos of all 13 members of the National Defense Commission on April 10. (Dong-a, Chosun, Hankook)

IAEA inspectors, who were monitoring the disablement of the Yongbyon nuclear facility in North Korea, have left the country following demands from Pyongyang. (JoongAng, Hankyoreh, Segye)

State Department Spokesman Robert Wood said that the expulsion is a "step backward" and further isolates North Korea from the outside world, adding, "The North is going to have to deal with the consequences of such decisions." (Hankook)

According to InsideDefense.com, the Department of Defense will review the scenario of North Korea's collapse in the process of preparing the Quadrennial Defense Review, the Pentagon's four-year strategy planning exercise to be reported to Congress early next year. (Hankyoreh)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-North Korea

Major newspapers reported that IAEA inspectors, who were monitoring the disablement of the Yongbyon nuclear facility in North Korea, have left the country and turned off all surveillance cameras following demands from Pyongyang.

JoongAng Ilbo, Seoul Shinmun and Segye Ilbo reported that the U.S. and Japan yesterday submitted lists of North Korean entities targeted for sanctions to a UN panel in response to Pyongyang's recent rocket launch. The U.S. submitted a list of 11 North Korean entities involved in prohibited missile-related activities, and Japan put forward a list of at least 15 violators. Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo questioned whether the sanctions will be effective because these entities can easily change their names, thereby rendering any sanctions meaningless.

Moderate Hankook Ilbo referenced State Department Spokesman Robert Wood's statements that the expulsion of U.S. inspectors is "a step backward" and further isolates North Korea from the outside world and that "the North is going to have to deal with the consequences

of such decisions." White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs was also quoted as saying that the administration is "anxious for the North Koreans to come back to the table."

Left-leaning Hankyoreh Shinmun cited experts saying that North Korea will completely restore all of its nuclear facilities to their original state within a year and reproduce plutonium within three months. This means that the Six-Party nations have three months to resolve the nuclear issue diplomatically. The newspaper noted that it is necessary to have dialogue before the situation becomes worse.

In a related story headlined, "Will North Korea's Brinkmanship Tactic Work Again?" conservative Segye Ilbo quoted an expert as saying that if the U.S. accepts North Korea's request for bilateral talks under these circumstances, it will give the impression that the U.S. is bowing before North Korea's threats. The newspaper also noted that China has kept silent about the North Korean nuclear issue for fear that pressuring the North may shake up the existing regime, which could destabilize Northeast China.

Chosun Ilbo, Hankook Ilbo and Hankyoreh Shinmun carried editorials about the ROKG's delay in announcing its decision to join the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).

Chosun Ilbo editorialized: "The ROKG should not make a hasty decision on the PSI participation issue. It should take enough time to calculate the pluses and minuses of full participation and adequately prepare for various scenarios."

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Hankook Ilbo editorialized: "It would be too simple to construe the ROK's full participation in the PSI, which the previous Roh Moo-hyun Administration avoided, as a 'complete departure' from the Sunshine Policy. ... Furthermore, the ROKG should understand that China, which has as much influence on the Korean Peninsula issue as the U.S., is sensitive to the PSI. It would be desirable, rather than reproachable, for the ROKG to deeply consider this delicate issue."

Hankyoreh Shinmun editorialized: "The ROKG should immediately retract its decision to join the PSI, which is neither justifiable nor beneficial."

-President Obama's Visit to Central and South
----- America

Carrying the headline, "'Obama's Visit to Central and South America Is Aimed at Winning Favor of the Region... 'Smart Diplomacy' Will Be Accelerated," conservative Dong-a Ilbo reported that Obama will attend the Summit of the Americas today and that he has earnestly begun restoring relations with Central and South American nations.

Under the headline, "Will Obama Win the Heart of South America from China?" Chosun Ilbo reported that President Obama is trying to regain clout over South America, but China has already won the heart of the region through swift economic cooperation.

OPINIONS/EDITORIALS -----

NO BENEFITS FROM FULL PARTICIPATION IN PSI
(Hankyoreh Shinmun, April 17, 2009, Page 23)

The Lee Myung-bak Administration said it was going to make Korea a full participant in the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) if North Korea launched a rocket, but it has postponed the official announcement three times.

First, (the Administration) said that an official announcement would come immediately following the launch, which occurred on April 5, and then postponed (the official announcement) to follow the outcome of the United Nations Security Council discussion, which issued a

presidential statement on April 14. Yesterday, we were told the announcement would come by or around the weekend. Everyone and every agency seems to have a different interpretation as to the reason why.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade says it could influence matters with North Korea and that it has not finished coordinating with other concerned countries, however, the Ministry of Unification refutes this explanation by saying that nothing has changed pertaining to issues between Seoul and Pyongyang. Cheong Wa Dae (the presidential office in South Korea, or "Blue House") officials have a different story. It is becoming difficult to think of these officials as people who are working in the same administration.

The argument in favor of fully participating in PSI is also running in several directions at once. When President Lee met with ruling and opposition party leaders on April 6, he said, "The question of participating in the Proliferation Security Initiative is being actively considered in the context of international cooperation on the prevention of the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), (and we are pursuing full participation based on our own (internal) decision-making." He added that it was not intended to serve as a response to North Korea's rocket launch.) A high-ranking member of his administration has since said the participating in PSI "would not look good immediately following North Korea's response to the UN Security Council Presidential Statement while admitting, "The decision to participate in PSI is one of a few measures to apply pressure on Pyongyang."

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Participating in PSI does not seem promising as an effective policy. The administration says that it only applies to territorial waters and not to the open sea. It appears therefore that the standing "Agreement on Inter-Korean Maritime Shipping" could be applied without the danger of angering North Korea or the potential of an armed clash.

The administration, then, has itself essentially admitted that there are no practical benefits to be had from participating in the program. Nevertheless the administration says that with 94 countries participating in PSI that participating is the international norm and South Korea needs to participate. The Obama Administration, however, is in the process of adjusting the tone of U.S. policies towards so-called rogue states like Iran and Cuba from one of "pressure and sanctions" to one of "dialogue and working together." It is not placing the same weight on PSI as did the Bush Administration, and is not even strongly recommending we participate.

The confusion over PSI is a policy disaster that has occurred in the course of moving forward on a hard-line policy that fails to have a precise strategy or ample preparation. The administration should immediately retract its decision to join the PSI, which is neither justifiable nor beneficial. If it allows itself to continue to be carried away by calls for a hard-line approach it will only give North Korea one more thing to react to and thereby further hurt inter-Korean relations. It is time for President Lee to make a wise decision.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper, and it is identical to the Korean version, except that the bracketed language is in the English version provided by the newspaper but not in the Korean version.)

SHOULD WE REALLY RUSH INTO WMD INITIATIVE?
(Chosun Ilbo, April 17, 2009, Page 31)

After witnessing the government's confusion and feuding between ministries regarding South Korea's full participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), it makes one wonder whether we can truly entrust this government with the security of the nation. The government convened a foreign policy and security meeting on Tuesday and tentatively agreed to participate in the PSI.

The weekly meeting involves the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Unification and Defense, as well as the head of the National Intelligence Agency, the chief presidential secretary for foreign affairs and national security and the head of the Prime Minister's office.

Blue House Spokesman Lee Dong-kwan said after the meeting that an announcement declaring Seoul's full participation in the PSI would be made "either today or tomorrow." But on Wednesday, President Lee Myung-bak questioned whether this was the right time to make the announcement. The announcement was subsequently postponed until this weekend. At the end of March, the government said it would immediately declare its participation if North Korea fired a rocket.

But when North Korea did so on April 5, South Korea said the PSI was not something that can be used as a direct countermeasure against the launch. The government said it would wait a few days, during which the Foreign Ministry, which favored "immediate participation," is said to have conflicted with the Unification Ministry, which favored a "cautious decision."

Just what is the role of the weekly foreign policy and national security meeting? Ministries and officials are fanning confusion by making conflicting statements regarding such an important foreign policy and national security issue as participation in the PSI. It is now difficult for the President to avoid being criticized for doing little to prevent the confusion.

Consequently, the issue of Seoul's participation in the PSI has now encountered a dilemma. The U.S. government issued an unofficial

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"welcome" message to South Korean correspondents in Washington D.C. on Tuesday, amid news that Seoul's announcement was imminent. U.S. President Barack Obama plans to make the PSI, presently including 94 countries, the framework of a global initiative to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, and establish necessary global regulations. In contrast, North Korea has been saying that South Korea's participation would be "an act of war."

There is also a considerable amount of opposition to South Korea's participation in the PSI within the country on the grounds that it would not be an effective measure to sanction North Korea for launching the rocket, and would only serve to increase tensions on the Korean peninsula. This opposition is valid to some degree, although claims that the PSI could trigger a war are groundless. Seoul's participation in the PSI may certainly escalate tensions, which are already high after the North's decision to restart its nuclear facilities, even further, as North Korea has vowed retaliation. Yet it would be difficult for South Korea to ignore the PSI, after having been so vocal about the need for international cooperation in dealing with North Korea's nuclear threat.

Now that the situation has deteriorated, the South Korean government should not make a hasty decision on the PSI participation issue. It should take enough time to calculate the pluses and minuses of full participation and adequately prepare for various scenarios. Rather than causing more serious damage by racing to decide, it would be wise to consider a strategic point of view that takes into account the overall security situation in Korea. And the President himself must take the initiative.

IT IS NOT EASY TO CALCULATE PLUSES AND MINUSES OF PSI PARTICIPATION

(Hankook Ilbo, April 17, 2009, Page 35)

Some people construe the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) as a scheme by the U.S. to indirectly 'contain' its strategic rivals including China. Participation by 90 countries including the U.S. and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) does not give further justification to the PSI.

It would be too simple to construe the ROK's full participation in the PSI, which the previous Roh Moo-hyun Administration avoided, as a 'complete departure' from the Sunshine Policy. Of course, the Roh Administration put inter-Korean relations before the U.S.-ROK

alliance. However, the Lee Myung-bak Government should not provoke North Korea to aggravate the issues over the Kaesong Industrial Complex and a detained ROK civilian. Also, there is a concern that (ships from the two Koreas) could clash at sea.

Furthermore, the ROKG should understand that China, which has as much influence on the Korean Peninsula issue as the U.S., is sensitive to the PSI. It would be desirable, rather than reproachable, for the ROKG to deeply consider this delicate issue.

FEATURES

WHY HOLBROOKE, NOT BOSWORTH
(Chosun Ilbo, April 17, 2009, Page 5)

By Reporter Lim Min-hyeok

Holbrooke asks for the ROK's commitment to Afghanistan and President Lee promises to provide "practical help."

Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke met President Lee Myung-bak and Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan in Seoul on April 16. During the meeting, President Lee promised to provide "practical support" to Afghanistan.

The ROKG said Holbrooke was in Seoul to pay his respects on his way to a Pakistan donors conference which will take place in Japan on

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Friday. His visit comes at a delicate time when South Korea feels the need to strengthen cooperation with the U.S. more urgently than ever before since North Korea is again boycotting the Six-Party Talks aimed at ending its nuclear program.

A diplomatic source said, "The fact that Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke, not Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth, is visiting Seoul at this time is highly symbolic. It means we have to show sincerity in the Afghan issue before we can expect solid cooperation from the U.S. in order to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue."

Timing of Holbrooke's visit

Special Representative Richard Holbrooke did not explicitly ask for the ROK's increased support including troop deployment. He expressed appreciation to the ROK for contributing considerably to the reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. The Obama Administration's diplomacy is different from the one-sided diplomacy of the Bush Administration. An ROK official said that the Obama Administration asks for help from its allies by seeking their voluntary participation.

Early last month, extraordinarily, an official from the U.S. Department of Defense specializing in Afghanistan affairs, attended the Security Policy Initiative (SPI) meeting. Also, during the recent ROK-U.S. summit held in London, President Obama told President Lee that the U.S. needs considerable support in Afghanistan. Holbrooke's visit to the ROK could be interpreted to mean that the U.S. is implicitly asking for the ROK's support.

In particular, Holbrooke's visit came when the ROK may need to ask a favor of the U.S. Professor Kim Sung-han at Korea University said that now that North Korea intends to derail the Six-Party Talks and pursue direct talks with the U.S., the ROK's only leverage could be a stronger alliance between the ROK-U.S. The ROKG remembers the nightmare during the first North Korean nuclear crisis in 1994 when the ROK was excluded from U.S.-North Korea talks and had to remain an outsider. In order that this not happen again, the ROK should pay attention to relations with the U.S.

Observers say that the current situation is similar to 2003 when the ROK decided to send its troops to Iraq. A diplomatic source said that, at that time, the Roh Moo-hyun Administration agreed to send troops, at the risk of losing its core supporters, in order to steer

President Bush's hard-line North Korea policy toward a direction it wanted.

Was the ROK's military commitment discussed?

The ROKG proposed to the U.S. its plans to provide 30 million dollars of additional aid and increase the number of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) personnel from 24 to 90. It appears that this is a preemptive reaction by the ROKG to block any request by the U.S. for (the ROK to) deploy troops which is a politically sensitive issue. However, an ROKG official said that the ROK's proportional share of the international support for Afghanistan is less than 1 percent. This indicates that the ROKG might consider offering additional support.

Recently, President Obama unveiled a new Afghan strategy outlining an increase in troops by 21,000. However, allies did not show an active interest (in participating), making the U.S. anxious. Therefore, some observers say that President Lee's remarks on practical support may hint at the possibility of the ROK's troop deployment to Afghanistan. Some people in the ruling party are expressing the opinion that, in the end, a military contribution by the ROK would be inevitable. However, a senior ROKG official said that "practical support" chiefly means economic aid. He added that currently there is no discussion on dispatching troops to Afghanistan.

PRESIDENT LEE: THE ROK WILL LOOK FOR WAYS TO HELP AFGHANISTAN

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(Seoul Shinmun, April 17, 2009, Page 2)

By reporter Lee Jong-lac

President Lee Myung-bak said on April 16 that he will look for ways to provide "practical support" to Afghanistan. He made this comment to Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke, who is on a visit to the ROK. This is noteworthy since it is President Lee's first (official) remark on the Afghan issue. The issue over ROK's troop deployment to Afghanistan has been emerging. President Lee Myung-bak said that the ROK sees the U.S.' review of its Afghanistan and Pakistan strategy as a comprehensive and realistic approach. President Lee added that he believes that since President Obama is taking united action together with the international community, (President Obama) will address this issue successfully.

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF HOLBROOKE'S VISIT?

(Hankyoreh Shinmun, April 17, 2009, Page 4)

By Reporter Lee Je-hoon, Hwang Joon-bum and Lee Yong-in

Presidential Vice Spokesperson Kim Eun-hye said on April 16 that President Lee Myung-bak met Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke. She added that President Lee was briefed on the U.S. government's review of its Pakistan and Afghanistan policies and current developments in the regions.

Holbrooke met separately with Kim Sung-hwan, Senior Presidential Secretary for Diplomacy and National Security, Lee Yong-joon, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Kim Tae-hyo, Presidential Secretary for National Security Strategy.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan exchanged opinions with Holbrooke for about 30 minutes. An ROK diplomatic official who also attended this meeting said that Holbrooke asked the ROK to provide police training personnel in order to bolster reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

STEPHENS